Volume XCIV No. 5 April 9, 1971 40 cents

# commonweal

## A CALL TO PENITENCE AND ACTION
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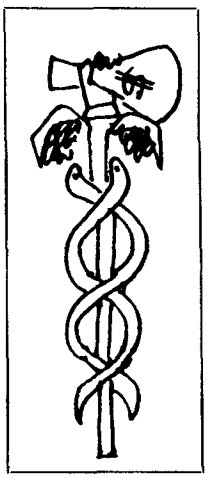

## WILL [illegible] IN '72?
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## PRIEST POWER IN BALTIMORE
JOHN EGAN

# HANS KUNG

## BEYOND POLEMICS
GREGORY BAUM

## AN INTERVIEW WITH KUNG
CLAUDE-FRANCOIS JULLIEN

PHILIP T. HARTUNG **KNEE-DEEP** JEFFREY MEYERS **THE LETTERS OF THOMAS MANN** SALLY CUNNEEN & LETTERS ON **WOMEN AND THE CHURCH** PAMELA RITTERMAN **FIVE VARIATIONS ON THE THEME OF JAPANESE PAINTING** MAURICE R. BERUBE **BLAMING THE VICTIM**

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# NEWS & VIEWS

### Peril in Paraguay

The showdown between state and progressive clergy appeared to move closer again in Paraguay, after seizure by police of an official of the Latin-American Episcopal Council, the assault upon the visiting bishop from Uruguay, and the subsequent excommunication of Paraguay's minister of the interior and its chief of police for complicity in the violence.

The actions tumbled one upon the other in mid-March, pointing up the facts that the Paraguayan regime of General Alfredo Stroessner is as repressive as ever and that the clergy is increasingly determined to correct the social plight of the people.

It is a determination shared by the highest ecclesiastical authorities, if reaction to the seizure and assault incidents is indicative.

For the excommunications were pronounced by the Archbishop of Asuncion, while protests against the regime's actions have come from the Paraguayan Bishops' Conference, from the Latin-American Episcopal Council (CELAM), and from the Apostolic Nuncio to Paraguay, among others. An impressive list.

The alleged reason for seizing the CELAM priest, and for beating up the bishop who came to see about his safety, was to protect Paraguay against the Tupamaros, the Uruguayan urban guerrilla movement.

A better explanation can be discovered, however, in the current *Informations Catholiques Internationales*: the Stroessner dictatorship is stepping up intimidation of reformers—and particularly, at the moment, leaders of the Christian Agrarian League. This is an organization of priests and laymen which seeks to right the injustice of 1.4 per cent of the people owning 89 per cent of the land, and 98.6 per cent only owning 11 per cent.

*Informations* specifically reports on a secret meeting at the office of the chief of police of San Ignacio, in which members of the regime participated and at which a decision was made to "eliminate" four priests and four laymen who head up the Christian Agrarian League.

According to *Informations*, "by elimination" is understood their "physical liquidation."

It is a nervous situation, but few look for the League, and least of all the clergy, to buckle under this pressure. Currently circulating in the name of Paraguayan priests is a statement making this strong affirmation:

"We priests will not preach violence, but we will not be accomplices of an institutionalized violence which supports the exploitation of the great majority for the benefit of the few; we will not be accomplices of the violence exercised by those who hold power; we will not become accomplices by keeping a guilty silence."

Thus the line is drawn. The next move seems up to the regime.

### Accenting the Positive

The "true-confession" stories of priests may be moving into a new mode—from "why I'm leaving" to "why I'm staying."

Swiss theologian Hans Küng outlined his reasons for hanging-in in the March 20 *America*. Now Puerto Rico's bishop-without-portfolio, Antulio Parrilla Bonilla, talks on the subject to Latin-america Press.

"I have not thought, and with the help of God I will never consider leaving the Catholic structures," said Bishop Parilla, "because I consider them in need of much reform and renovation."

But why stick? What can a free-lance bishop do?

"It is possible to work in the church and for the church as a bishop, although one has neither a diocese nor an official post," said Parilla. "The important thing is apostolic commitment, regardless of whether or not it is practiced within a complete jurisdiction."

Bishop Parilla has been an outspoken critic of the war and a champion of Puerto Rican independence.

### Principle Over Honor

The Council of Churches of the City of New York (Protestant) might be hung up on Hope (Bob), but comedyland's hawk can probably still count on Catholics.

As Religious News Service said in a side-bar story to the Council's cancellation of its Family of Man Award to the comic, "Episcopalian Hope has been a favorite of sorts with Catholic circles for many years."

RNS itemized: 1962, honorary degree of humane letters from Georgetown; 1965, Club of Champions Medal from the New York CYO; '65 also, St. Genesius Award from St. Mary's College, Moraga, Calif.; 1966, Pacem in Terris Award from Immaculate Heart College, Calif.

Immaculate Heart cited Hope for "distinguished service in the pursuit of freedom and peace." This is the same Hope who analyzed domestic dissent, post-Kent, in terms of U.S. failure to "use the power we have available" in Vietnam. ("We've looked like an impotent giant. The kids recognize that. Kids like a show of strength.")

Opposition to Hope's selection for the Protestant award was led by Rev. Richard Neuhaus, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Lutheran Church in Brooklyn.

Neuhaus seized on the paradox of a religious organization's celebrating an "uncritical supporter of the military establishment and the Indochina war." It won him his point—but also five telephone threats of death.

### Odds and Ends

—As William Cardinal Conway, Primate of All Ireland, was scoring drink at a seminar in Dundalk, nuns of St. Mary's Hospital, Castleblaney, were opening the country's first hospital bar, with Sisters acting as bartenders. Sister Mary Carmel, head of the hospital, explained the great advantage: "The patients will no longer have to depend on visitors to bring them a drink." That's the kind of care one has to admire.

—In the Feb. 26 *Commonweal* Terry Ann Knopf raised the question, "Who cares about Cairo?" The Catholic Interracial Council of Pittsburgh does, for one. It fired off chiding letters to prelates (Zuroweste and Cody) in a position to do something about racism in the Illinois river city, then sent $400 to the priest who has provided the principal Catholic witness in Cairo, Father Bernard Bodewes. JOHN DEEDY

Vadillo, *Siempre*, Mexico



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# CORRESPONDENCE

### Difficulty with Daly

Cincinnati, Ohio

*To the Editors:* Like Lily Tomlin I can boast of a high school diploma but Mary Daly's prose [Mar. 12], quite frankly, poops my mind. It is obfuscating, ponderously pompous and pedantic almost pontifically so. If you have a good idea and she has then why in the hell not say it simply and clearly like Charles Davis always does?

KIERAN QUINN

Merced, Calif.

*To the Editors:* As one who is committed to the "liberation" of women from centuries of subjugation by the church, I was interested in the March 12 article by Dr. Mary Daly.

With all due respect to Dr. Daly and her talents, I wonder if she really believes that the super-intellectual route to liberation via a new look at theology will really achieve our goals. Will the decisions that must be made, regrettably by men, to change things come about by lofty articles and books or will they be made in response to demand by the so-called ordinary woman?

If the latter is true, and I believe that it is, then the task is to speak to the ordinary woman in terms she can understand and stir her to action. She must be made to see that all the restrictions against her and her daughters are outrageous and insulting and then she must be motivated to take whatever action is necessary to change them.

Admittedly, this is not an easy task. Men have done such a marvelous job of brain-washing us to accept our "inferior" status that many of us actually enjoy it! I remember presenting a well reasoned paper to a parish club of "average" women on the subject of repression by the church. I was openly called a "nut," a "man-hater" and a few even less complimentary terms. My thoughts were overwhelmingly rejected—not on grounds of logic but by sheer emotion.

What we are trying to do is achieve

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COMMONWEAL *A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature and the Arts.*
*Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y.*
*Printed in the USA and published weekly,*
*except biweekly Christmas-New Year's and June to mid-September,*
*by Commonweal Publishing Co., 232 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016*
*MUrray Hill 3-2042.* *Copyright © 1971 Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc.*
*US and Canada, $12 a year. Foreign $14. Single copies 40¢*

# A CALL TO PENITENCE AND ACTION

*The editorial that follows is being published jointly during Holy Week by the following publications*: Christian Century, Christianity and Crisis, National Catholic Reporter *and* Commonweal. *Such a joint declaration is unique in religious journalism in this country and indeed in American journalism in general, and this fact provides some indication of the deep concern with which the editors of these publications view the continuing involvement of the United States in Vietnam.*

On Good Friday of what we dare to call this year of our Lord 1971 countless people in Indochina—God's children—are crying out, inchoately or articulately, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" To offer a human answer to such a cry is never easy. This year it is poignantly hard for Americans, because many of earth's millions raise the cry out of their perception of oppression by our government, our economy and our armed forces. Especially in Southeast Asia, American military might is repeating the crucifixion of Christ.

Let no one say that we are confusing religion and politics. Christ was crucified by soldiers of an imperial army in a conquered land under a ruler who enforced distorted law and maintained an oppressive order. It is Christ who has taught us that what we do to the least of his brothers we do to him. There was no clear separation of religion from politics on Golgotha, and there can be none today.

Even so, we do not make our charges glibly. In a world where people must make perplexing moral decisions, most Christian traditions take account of occasions when love has its "strange" work to do—a work of enforcement, pressure, even violence. Conscientious convictions may differ on the justification of coercion and war in specific circumstances. Too often, when men should recognize conflicts of judgment, they impute bad faith. All these reservations we take seriously.

But in this second decade of war in Vietnam we are convinced that the American church has been too patient—not too polemical—toward national leaders. We Christians have been too tolerant of American men of power, too forgetful of foreign victims of such power. Too often we have been



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manipulated into ineffectiveness by a sophisticated political machinery.

We voted, we petitioned, we paraded, we shouted. In one way or another we supported a few of our young men who risked their freedom in efforts to stop this war. But they have borne more than their share of the burden. It is time for the rest of us to give our hearts and voices to an accusation that even a purposefully-deaf government will hear.

—We accuse U.S. leaders of a total lack of proportion between ends sought and means used in Vietnam, and of deliberately closing their eyes to the almost incalculable human suffering which has resulted.

—We accuse two successive federal Administrations of treating politics as though it were a mass confidence game and of so gulling the public that most citizens now doubt the credibility of their own government.

—We accuse the U.S. government of laying waste an agrarian land by dropping two and one-half (soon to be three) times the tonnage of bombs that it dropped on Europe in all World War II, meanwhile poisoning much of the earth with defoliants.

—We accuse the United States of taking the leading role in killing 25,000-35,000 civilians in South Vietnam in 1970 alone, and many thousands more over the decade; of wounding four times as many, perhaps a third of whom have been children under 13; of turning some five million people—try to count that high!—into refugees. Such acts are the discordant accompaniment to genteel appeals for humane treatment of American prisoners.

—We accuse our political leaders of sustaining a Saigon government that oppresses its own people and imprisons its political opponents both before and after "free" elections.

—We accuse two U.S. Presidents of a vain chauvinism that thrives on rhetoric about a nation that must not lose its first war.

—We accuse the present Administration of cruel deception in claiming to be "winding down" a war by boasting of troop withdrawals while shifting the death and bloodshed to other peoples, caring only for American casualties, uprooting Asians in the path of American policy, proclaiming that air power will know no limitations except the final restraint of avoiding nuclear bombing.

—We accuse of national self-destruction a military machine that sends its young men out to "waste" rural hamlets and innocent lives, destroys their morale, and helplessly watches their progress in drug addiction.

—We accuse the government of robbing the poor, the oppressed minorities, the cities, and the schools to pay the costs of destruction.

—We accuse of absurd inconsistency those agents of power who piously preach against isolation, while themselves isolating this nation from the moral judgment of the community of nations. The real isolationism we must fear is America's throwing its weight around in the world, seeking to shape the world's destiny without invitation or consent.

These accusations we make in love of a country that is "beautiful for patriot dream," a country that Abraham Lincoln—in words that would occur to no honest orator today—once called "the last best hope of earth."

Holy Week has long been a time for Christian self-assessment and renewal of commitment. In issuing this call, we assume no moral superiority over citizens of other faiths; we say only that we must now testify out of our heritage, as we hope others will testify out of theirs.

Therefore we call upon our fellow Christians to make this Holy Week a season of penitence and commitment, when faithful believers seize these opportunities:

—To make known to our elected representatives that we have had enough of military ferocity and moral cynicism, that the days of pseudo-bargaining have extended too long, that it is time to get out of Southeast Asia, doing what we can, not to sustain unreal and impossible "commitments," not to protect our injured vanity, but to repair the damage done to a suffering people;

—To warn our Congressmen, who are in a position to warn others who do not hear us, that politicians cannot fool all the people all the time and that the tactics of deception destroy leadership;

—To support passage of Senator Brooke's resolution for a Senate inquiry on how to end American involvement, as well as Senator Hartke's resolution demanding prompt withdrawal from Indochina;

—To strengthen secular and interfaith organizations struggling to end the war and revise national priorities;

—To endorse and participate in the forthcoming actions, demonstrations and rallies for peace, so that they may be neither wrecked by the violent nor muted by the complacent.

These statements of Christian conscience must now be implemented through effective actions that will finally shut down the machinery of this war. For as Daniel Berrigan has told us in his Germantown sermon: "There are a hundred ways of nonviolent resistance up to now untried or half-tried, or badly tried, but the peace will not be won without such serious and constant and sacrificial and courageous action on the part of a large number of good men and women."

We can in this season, by refusing to render unto Caesar what is God's, claim the gift of the Friday so strangely called good and of the Day of Resurrection that in this tortured world promises life.



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# Priest Power In Baltimore

Alderman Paddy Bauler of Chicago, an old mainstay of the Democratic Machine, often said, "The City ain't ready for reform." Nobody in Mayor Daley's City Council ever challenged this remark, but forces—economic, political, sociological and at times religious—kept pressure on the structures so that Chicago, like other cities, changed in spite of itself.

The National Federation of Priests' Councils is such a force in the church. It is a new and unique structure. It is the only well organized, self-disciplined, deliberative body representing the majority of the priests of any large country in the world.

Obviously, other forces are moving to effect reform and renewal in the church in America today. Among these are the decline in trained personnel, a troubled school system, new theological developments, courageous and competent canon lawyers, a diminishing but vocal Catholic press and the developing organizations of women Religious.

However, the elected delegates of the NFPC, representing, as they do, some 39,000 priests in the U.S. may well be the most potent force working within the structure of the church today.

The fact that after only three years of existence they embrace some 132 Diocesan Priests' Councils (100 of them official diocesan senates) is due to the organizational and political acumen of the handful of priests who brought the Federation into existence in the spring of 1968 in Chicago.

They were, of course, spurred by the call of Vatican II for senates of priests in each diocese. They were further aided by the desire of priests everywhere to share responsibility in the decision-making process in the church. This desire reflected concern about their own lives, but never rested there. The proceedings of every council and each national gathering give evidence of their agony over the renewal of the church, the participation of religious and laity in the work of renewal and the freeing and healing of the people of the world, particularly the poor and the powerless. They, above all, desired a forum where differing viewpoints on the church and its governance could be expressed and deliberated.

Another factor, now forgotten, assured the success of the organizational drive. Nicholas von Hoffman of the *Washington Post*, taken with the dramatic and successful organization in Chicago of the first Priests' Association (differing from a senate, since it is not directly under the bishop's control), wrote a series of articles in which he spoke of the goals, purposes and success of this group. The Hoffman articles appeared in the *Washington Post* during the week of the bishops' annual meeting in that city. Lest they would be faced with similar free-wheeling and independent associations in their own dioceses, many bishops returned home to set in motion the process of establishing senates over which they would have greater control. This was a welcome and fortuitous development. Key priests in many dioceses then saw the need for further organization, coordination, political strength to speak and act on nationwide problems in the church and the country. The initial organizational lessons had been well learned. The Federation was a reality within a year.

Structurally, acceptance came slowly. Because of the leadership of John Cardinal Dearden, the officers of the Federation met frequently with a liaison committee of bishops, but conservative forces within the hierarchy almost blocked the appearance of Father Patrick O'Malley, the Federation's first president, before the bishops at their meeting in 1969.

Though some bishops, priests and laity still voice doubts about the validity and necessity of such a federating organization, an honest observer would have been assured at the NFPC annual meeting held March 14-18 in Baltimore. This body—233 chosen delegates and alternates from 132 member councils—is the strongest representative forum for discussion, deliberation and action in the church today. (The National Assembly of Women Religious will formally adopt their constitution in Denver later this Spring.)

Satisfaction, relief and a small sense of accomplishment greeted the quiet and dignified report of Father Joseph Byron of the "Washington 19" (priests of the Washington archdiocese who had been punished without due process for their alleged stand on *Humanae Vitae*) as he recounted the two-and-one-half year efforts by the NFPC and the Concerned Canon Lawyers to obtain a fair hearing for these priests. He had returned from Rome the previous day and reported that finally an adequate hearing had been granted by the Office of the Congregation for the Clergy.

This was a signal victory for human rights, but could never, and most believe would never, have been accomplished except for the competence and determination of the representatives of the priests councils of the NFPC and the power of numbers behind them.

The 182 to 23 vote taken on St. Patrick's Day urgently requesting from the bishops of the world a plan for the immediate change in the disciplinary laws leading to a choice by a priest of marriage or celibacy was not an impulse of the moment. It again proved the absolute necessity of the NFPC as a forum and marked a phase in a long and responsible process.

Since a year ago, at a similar meeting in San Diego when the assembly refused to discuss the issue of celibacy, professional studies—paid for by the priests themselves



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—were undertaken to determine the mind of the priests of the country on this issue. Outstanding theologians were consulted. Councils of priests in nearly every diocese undertook serious dialogue with their members, women Religious and thousands of laity to determine their mind on the question. The meeting in Baltimore provided the forum for these opinions to be crystallized. Long and tedious caucuses were held so that each word of their final statement calling for shared leadership, greater holiness in the clergy, optional celibacy and action on social concerns would responsibly reflect their intent and that of their constituencies.

A number of other proceedings occupied St. Patrick's Day. Along with a unanimous condemnation of the war in Southeast Asia and the present involvement of the United States in that war, the assembly of priests expressed strong concern for the plight of Soviet Jewry as well as for their suffering brothers in the political repressions in South America. They also pledged to work for the relief of persons seeking conscientious objector status regarding a particular war.

The specter of the vast number of poor and the powerless brought unanimous action in behalf of the United Farm Workers, the National Office of Black Catholics, and the organizational drives to bring justice to the "day laborers" of the country through Chicago-based Project Amos.

Various priests, they knew, were breaking new ground in ministry. The Baltimore meeting once again showed where the "jagged edge" was. The excellent and challenging project GIFT (Growth in Faith Together) designed by Baltimore laity and clergy was welcomed as a successful venture in inter-parochial cooperation, and the work of NFPC founder, Father John Hill of Chicago, in his Alliance Against Repression (which accomplished Bail Reform in Chicago courts) presented a sharp and successful departure from traditional parochial and institutional ministry.

Who were these priests? They averaged 40 years of age. They had been elected by their peers and were conscious of this responsibility. Their experience had proved to them that a pluralistic world demanded greater pluralism in their ministries and in their life style. They came from the Barrios of Texas, the ghettos of New York and San Francisco; they represented priests in college ministries as well as Chancery offices. Most were from the workaday parishes of middle and suburban America, and like the rest of us are trying to adjust to a church and a world governed by non-heroes. They were men who were suffering more than most would expect from the rising departure from the active ministry of their friends and colleagues. They are men of dedication, faith and good humor. They are priests who love and wish to serve church, world and people.

Little talk was heard about liturgical and ecclesiastical matters, because, as Father Frank Bonnike, president of the Federation, said, "Our country is in deep trouble and we must give ourselves to the struggle to make things right."

The strength and vitality of the NFPC, as in any political or church organization, rests on the work of the local council back home. Will the several priests' senates and associations also read the "signs of the times" and effectively back the decisions made in Baltimore? Will the American hierarchy at its meeting in Detroit in April chose articulate and competent bishops to represent the voice of the American clergy at the Fall Synod when it meets in Rome on the priesthood and world justice? Will they chose bishops who have proven that they understand the mind of their priests and people and have worked closely in a spirit of collegiality with them?

These questions are still to be answered. As one prominent theologian stated before the NFPC meeting, "I hope the bishops realize that the brass ring is coming around for the last time!"

If the priests assembled in Baltimore accurately reflect the feeling of the clergy of the country, then there is still enormous hope. They crave intelligent and shared leadership from their superiors, but, in its absence, refuse to allow the vacuum of leadership to daunt them any longer. While differing strongly with the view of the respected president of Notre Dame University on optional celibacy, they heeded him when he urged them to work for more sensible procedures in the selection of bishops and to manfully assume leadership, to speak and act boldly in the building of the kingdom of God.

Finally, as the priests stated in a significant document at the Federation meeting's close:

> "Change is inevitable in the life of mankind and consequently in the church, since the church will always be human. Thus, a discerning adaptation on the part of the church is imperative, unless we are fatalistically convinced that human and social evolution is a blind and uncontrollable force.
>
> "Priests, because they are human, are no exception to the need for reform. A profoundly personal and structural renewal is called for now. Theology supports it, surveys give us a diagnosis and a prognosis, but only a personal and institutional renewal can cure the ills.
>
> "The recommendations we propose do not negate the past. They build upon the tradition of a constant, yet flexible, ministry. They constitute a measured attempt to adjust priestly life and work to the realities of the needs of the American people now."

The National Federation of Priests' Councils is an organization to note and to note well. Their gathering in Baltimore is one to remember. JOHN J. EGAN

*(Msgr. John J. Egan is Lewis Fellow at Notre Dame University and a board member of the Association of Chicago Priests.)*



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# INFALLIBILITY BEYOND POLEMICS

*Should Küng examine the historicity of all truth, including the Scriptures?*

GREGORY BAUM

The only honest way of reading Hans Küng's *Infallible? An Inquiry* (Doubleday, $5.95) is to abstract from his vehement polemics and concentrate on the question posed by him and the tentative answer he proposes. The problem of his book is how to be honest about the mistakes the church has made in her teaching while at the same time affirming the abiding nature of her truth.

It is taken for granted today that the church has made mistakes. Küng presents a long list of instances where ecclesiastical teaching has been radically modified, and he supposes that in many instances the changes introduced were corrections of previous errors. Contemporary Catholics remember above all the doctrinal changes made by Vatican II. While Popes Gregory XVI and Pius IX repeatedly condemned the principle of religious liberty, Vatican II has affirmed and defended it. While Popes Leo XIII, Pius X, Benedict XV insisted on the inerrancy of scripture, defended the traditional view on the authorship of the biblical books and rejected the historical-critical method in biblical exegesis, Pius XII, John XXIII and, above all, Vatican II have recommended the application of historical criticism to the biblical literature. While Pius XI condemned the ecumenical movement in his encyclical *Mortalium Animos,* refusing to acknowledge the common Christian bond created by baptism, Vatican II has promoted the ecumenical movement and affirmed the Spirit-created fellowship among Christians beyond the confessional boundaries. While Pius XII in more than one encyclical insisted, against a considerable theological tradition, that the Roman Catholic church was identical with Christ's body on earth and hence refused membership in this body to Christians of other churches, Vatican II has clearly acknowledged ecclesial elements outside the Roman Catholic church and broken the strict identity between this church and the body of Christ.

FATHER GREGORY BAUM, O.S.A., *is the author of several books including* Faith and Doctrine *and* Man Becoming.

A most significant mistake was, according to Küng, Pope Paul VI's ban on contraception. Why did the Pope, in his encyclical *Humanae Vitae,* go against the majority of his advisers? Why did he follow the counsel of the minority report? Because the present understanding of ecclesiastical and papal infallibility, Küng argues, does not permit the admission of error and the change of moral teaching. The distinction between fallible and infallible teaching, Küng thinks, is of no help in this case since the condemnation of birth control was the common teaching on morals, taught by popes and bishops everywhere, and hence qualifies as infallible teaching of the so-called *magisterium ordinarium.* Küng follows here the stricter Roman view, probably also held by Pope Paul, that all moral teaching consistently taught by the world episcopate is infallible.

If, therefore, we want to be honest about the mistakes we have made, we must examine the doctrine of infallibility. The key witness for the church's claim to infallible pronouncements is Vatican Council I, held under Pius IX in 1870. Küng re-examines this Council, he brings out the inadequate biblical foundation for papal infallibility, he recalls many problematic features of the conciliar definition: more importantly, he examines the concept of truth presupposed by pope, bishops and theologians at that Council and suggests that the claim to infallible pronouncements was related to the highly rational model of truth proper to the secular culture of that age. It is possible, therefore, to take a second look at the church's claim to infallible teaching.

Hans Küng here draws, quite brilliantly, a parallel to the changing understanding of the Bible. Scripture, according to Catholic teaching, is Word of God. In the past we looked upon the scripture as inerrant. Because it was Word of God, the church was not ready to admit any errors in its pages. A more critical, historical approach has taught us, however, that there are many mistakes in the Bible. How did theologians deal with this problem? They did not distinguish in scripture the parts that are inspired by God and hence inerrant, and



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the parts that are not inspired and hence possibly erroneous. They rather proposed that the entire scripture is inspired, the entire Bible communicates God's Word to men, despite the mistakes we find in it and the misconceptions future generations may still discover in it. This viewpoint at first caused consternation and anger among Catholics and even provoked negative reactions from the hierarchy, but it was eventually acknowledged by the church and became its official position.

Is it not possible, Küng now inquires, to solve the problem of the church's infallibility in similar fashion? Today we no longer deny the mistakes in the church's teaching. At first theologians invoked the distinction between infallible and fallible teaching, but once this was done, they found that even the pronouncements classified as infallible were sometimes erroneous and in need of correction. Can we not, therefore, simply affirm, in strict parallelism to the privileged position of the Bible, that *despite the mistakes* the Catholic church abides in God's truth and communicates the Gospel unfailingly?

How does Küng answer this question? In a special section he examines the role of authoritative pronouncements in the life of the church. He distinguishes three kinds of pronouncements. First there are pronouncements that sum up the story of salvation in a brief formula. For instance, "Christ is Lord." Credal declarations of this kind have been used in the church from the beginning. They are necessary for the proclamation of the Gospel. Then there are delimiting pronouncements, intended to condemn an anti-Gospel trend or movement. The early church's exclusion of those who regarded the Mosaic Law as binding on all, was an instance of this. Authoritative pronouncements of this kind, however, are necessary only at crucial moments in the church's life when all methods of persuasion have failed. Thirdly, there are defining pronouncements intended to explicitate Christ's teaching according to a particular school of theology or trend of piety. These defining pronouncements, Küng holds, are *not* necessary for the promotion of the Gospel. The record of the Gospel we have in the New Testament is explicit enough.

Within these limits, then, Küng affirms the need for authoritative ecclesiastical pronouncements in the teaching of the Gospel. What he questions is whether these pronouncements, though binding on the community when they are made, can be called infallible. Since they are inevitably conditioned by the situation and the spiritual climate in which they are made, they must, in another setting, be rethought and reformulated. They are never absolutes, they are never unconditional.

Nonetheless, Küng explains, because of the unchanging norm of scripture and the Spirit operative in the community, the church will always abide in the truth. The church is indefectible in proclaiming the Gospel. Those who seek Christ in his fullness, can always find him in her message. Since the church's fidelity to truth is a dynamic, rather than a static reality, it implies a movement toward the truth, it includes her own critical review of the past, her willingness to modify and correct past positions, and her Spirit-created ability to be faithful to Christ in the present. Even without claiming infallibility for her authoritative pronouncements, the church remains indefectibly in God's truth.

This is Hans Küng's position. While some theologians may disagree with him—and I shall express my own reservations further on—Küng stands wholly within the Catholic theological tradition despite the apparent novelty of his view. He upholds the church as the ground and pillar of truth. The church communicates the Gospel unfailingly. At the same time he courageously faces the fact that the changes in ecclesiastical teaching which have occurred over the centuries demand a theological explanation. Popes and bishops are not in a position to discredit or condemn Küng's thesis unless they propose an alternative explanation how a church that claims infallibility for her teaching can propose at the Council of Lyons (1274) that non-Catholics will go to hell immediately upon death while teaching at Vatican II that divine salvation is offered to men wherever they may be.

The offensive aspect of Küng's book is his vehement, though brilliant, polemical style. Let it also be said that the speculative part of the book is not as carefully done as is his wont. He combines the serious theological question raised by him with so much courage, with a persuasive accusation against the present administration in the church and a strongly argued case against papal absolutism which, he thinks, still determines the policies and teachings of the Catholic church. It may well be that polemics are necessary to bring a crucial issue to the consciousness of those who hold power in the church. In itself, however, the question of infallibility raised by Küng and the need for a new answer, have nothing to do with the shortcomings of the present ecclesiastical government. The problem is raised by the church's historical character itself.

What are the reservations I have in regard to Hans Küng's book?

a) It is a mistake to examine the church's infallibility by reflecting only on the errors of the past. What is in need of being rethought and reformulated is not a few isolated pronouncements lacking in wisdom but the entire teaching of the church, including the most authoritative biblical and credal statements. Even if the church had never made the slightest mistake in her doctrines, it would be necessary again and again to reinterpret her entire teaching as she moves from one age to another.

Throughout his book Hans Küng suggests that the truth of salvation is available in understandable form in the New Testament and that the church's fidelity to the Gospel demands that she remain as closely as possible to New Testament teaching. This is no surprise



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to those who are familiar with Küng's extensive writings. For Küng, post-biblical developments in the church may be valid, but they are purely human and never divinely established events. While this is a defensible Catholic position, conservative in character, many contemporary theologians, especially among liberals, prefer to think of divine revelation, though completed in Jesus Christ and definitely attested to in the New Testament, as an ongoing reality in the church, summoning forth the church's faith, constituting her now as the community of the faithful, and making the church's present faith-experience the focal point, from which to understand the entire Gospel.

b) While Küng presents an analysis of authoritative religious language and brings out the situational character of ecclesiastical statements, he does not examine carefully enough the historicity of all truth. In several paragraphs he admits that a pronouncement or a sentence has no definite meaning in and by itself, abstractly speaking. A pronouncement is always made in a context addressed to certain people, charged with a meaning that arises out of the wider historical situation. But Küng does not draw the radical consequences from this. For if every sentence has meaning only in the particular conversation in which it was uttered, then this applies to the New Testament witness as well, and in order to be faithful to the truth contained in a biblical sentence we have to interpret what it means in the conversation going on in the church today, when people have different questions and understand reality in different categories. Here again we are led to the wider task of reinterpreting the Gospel.

c) Since truth is historical, one must ask whether Küng is not overly hasty in designating as mistakes ecclesiastical pronouncements that were later corrected by other positions. Why do they have to be mistakes? They may have corresponded to the demands of the Gospel at that particular moment of the church's life. Küng himself recalls that the condemnation of taking interest on loans, upheld by the church over many centuries, was reluctantly abandoned under the pressure of capitalist society and its enterprising and acquisitive spirit. Is it necessary to call the former position "wrong" and the present one "right"? Or let us look at the birth control question. While I do not think that the present papal teaching is an adequate moral norm for families living in modern society, I can easily recall cultures in which woman was in an inferior position, dependent on and subject to her husband as his ward and servant, and where the introduction of birth control would have removed power and dignity from the wife and brought her more under the domination of her husband. If we appreciate the historicity of truth, we should not be hasty in calling a past position, even if different from our own, a mistake or an error.

I agree, of course, that the church has sometimes erred, i.e., made a bad doctrinal judgment when a new cultural situation had arrived and greater wisdom was already available (I recall the issues of religious liberty, biblical interpretation, the ecumenical movement, etc.), but because I believe with Küng in the Spirit's guidance of the church, I am more interested in grasping the truth, or even the kernel of truth, contained in her past teaching.

d) For this reason, then, in line with the previous remarks, I prefer to seek the truth in the doctrine of infallibility and instead of rejecting it, reinterpret it in the light of the church's present experience.

In the past, the doctrine of infallibility symbolized the immutability of dogma. Dogma was regarded as irreformable. We thought that we could be faithful to the Gospel simply by repeating the ancient dogmatic formulas and, when faced with new problems, by seeking additional, equally immutable doctrinal propositions. Küng himself has suggested that this view presupposes a special model of truth, a highly rational one, a model that became the exclusive and overriding one in the rationalism of the Enlightenment and the scientism of the 19th century.

Today this model seems no longer acceptable to us. We acknowledge the historicity of truth. A proposition has no meaning as such: a proposition reveals its meaning only when it is inserted in the conversation in which it was originally uttered. We may ask the question, therefore, what the doctrine of infallibility would mean if understood in accordance with the contemporary model of truth. It would express the Spirit-created power of the church to remain faithful to the Gospel not only by repeating the ancient creeds but by reinterpreting them, in reliance on her present experience and the continual testing with the scriptures. Understood in this way, the doctrine of infallibility would symbolize the reformability of dogma in the church. Because of this gift, the church should be able to announce the Gospel as the good news for today. Because of this gift, the church in her teaching of the Gospel is not tied to the 16th century, nor to the 5th, nor even to the first century. She is not committed, as are the churches that do not claim infallibility, to the biblical language that nobody understands today and to a Jesus who is a stranger in our culture. Because of this gift, the ground for the proclamation of the Gospel is not biblical doctrine as such but the Spirit-created, scripture-tested experience of the church, out of which she puts into words what the Gospel means today.

This, then, is where I differ from Hans Küng's thesis. While he makes dogma relative in regard to the abiding scriptural norm, I think it is theologically sounder and historically more correct to make dogma relative in regard to the church's ongoing, authoritative self-definition.



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# CHRISTIANITY WITH A HUMAN FACE

*An interview with Hans Küng*

CLAUDE-FRANCOIS JULLIEN

FORTY-THREE-years-old, tan, blue eyes, rectangular face . . . Hans Küng is a happy man, tranquil and pugnacious. He was born at Sursee, in the canton of Lucerne in Switzerland: "I am a citizen of a very small country which has a long tradition of liberty." He also explains: "My family was Catholic, without complexes. That left its mark on me. I am both free and rigorous with theologians and churches, Catholic or Protestant."

Hans Küng made his secondary studies at the coeducational *Gymnasium* of Lucerne: "I wanted to withdraw. I went to Rome in search of more discipline, to deepen my knowledge of traditional theology and the workings of the church. I arrived with a very, very obedient attitude. It took me at least five years to understand that the way of conceiving theology in Rome was outdated."

Studies at the Gregorian, directed by Jesuits: "No doubt that's the reason it is so often said I am a Jesuit. I'm quite flattered, of course. But I am a secular priest of the diocese of Basel." He adds: "I suspect that there are intelligent people outside the Society of Jesus."

*This interview with* HANS KUNG *is reprinted, with permission, from* Le Nouvel Observateur *of March 1, 1971. Claude-François Jullien is on the staff of* Le Nouvel Observateur.

Ordained in 1954, a vicar at Lucerne, he was sent to Paris to pursue his studies. He speaks with respect of his teachers, Congar, de Lubac. . . . After his doctorate in theology, he was named professor at the University of Tübingen. In 1962, John XXIII named him an official theological advisor at the Council. Küng explains: "My concerns cannot be understood if you ignore the university milieu in which I live. I urge a battle for a Christianity with a more human face. I do not separate scholarship from everyday life: I love to celebrate Mass on Sunday with the whole community, to preach at home in Switzerland and to deliver the Christian message—all day long—to the patients at the hospital where I am assigned."

**Q.** *The Preface of your book is very hard on Paul VI. It borders on insolence: "It is true that a journey to Jerusalem was undertaken. . . . But . . . the state of Israel has not been recognized." You are speaking of the Pope?*

**A.** I respect the personality of Paul VI, his good will. I am persuaded that he has the best intentions, for the church and humanity. But how are these intentions realized? Obviously, one could keep quiet. I know that there are people in the church and outside it who suffer because of this lack of honesty. I say only what other theologians, bishops, and Christians say in private. . . . If the Catholic church wants to be a community of free Christians, we must not follow totalitarian patterns. Criticism without loyalty is destructive; loyalty without criticism is totalitarian.

**Q.** *You take the warpath against papal infallibility, defined by Vatican I as a revealed truth. . . .*

**A.** Once upon a time, Catholics affirmed that the Pope needed a papal state in order to be the Pope. Those who disagreed were excommunicated. The Pope's state was taken from him: he remained the Pope.

It is the same with infallibility, in the sense of infallibility of propositions. For my part, I say: the church is infallible because it is sustained in the truth despite all errors, but it does not need infallible propositions to manifest its infallibility. Besides, I prefer the term indefectibility. This conception has behind it the original Christian message and the strongest tradition. It is not even in contradiction with Vatican I. When the infallibility of the church was defined at that time, it was supposed, in naive fashion, that this could not be conceived without infallible propositions, just as without a papal state. I have questioned this supposition. It is an inquiry. I simply ask for a well-grounded, well-argued response.

My argument for a faith which knows



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why it believes relates to the concern of numerous Christians who no longer want to receive truths without reflection. We need propositions not only guaranteed from without, but which manifest their own truth. . . .

**Q.** *This placing in question of infallibility implies also the end of the church as a monarchy. . . .*

**A.** The Pope's authority will not be diminished but transformed. John XXIII did not have less authority than Pius XII and nevertheless he did not insist on formulas. He did not define dogma. The authority of John XXIII derived from the fact that it was founded not on him but on the Gospel.

When Paul VI builds on the Gospel (*Populorum Progressio*), he receives a warm welcome. But when he stresses a traditional truth of the church, as on birth control, he encounters difficulties. Now, I think—it is the point of departure for my argument—that infallibility was implicated in this very questionable stand taken on birth control.

**Q.** *You seem to enter into rebellion. You have refused to ask for an imprimatur.*

**A.** My gesture is not a rebellion. It shows that the *imprimatur*, prior censorship, is outmoded, like the inquisition. Sometimes one must resist authority to prove the necessity for changes.

The *imprimatur* did not spare my book, *The Church*, from proceedings by the Roman inquisition. . . . I know there are theologians and bishops who want an end to this absolutist system.

**Q.** *Has the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith instigated new proceedings against your latest book?*

**A.** Not to my knowledge. But I would not be surprised if that is begun soon. Perhaps it is underway: it is always possible to instigate special proceedings by an irregular tribunal.

Rome asked the German bishops to declare themselves. They said that it seemed to them—it is a prudent enough statement—that certain decisive doctrinal elements were not safeguarded. They did not say which. They leave the theological discussion to the theologians. They have not replied to my very explicit question: does the infallibility of the church require infallible propositions? They even avoided the word *infallible* in their statement. I would hope that they repeat, after Gamaliel in the *Acts:* "if their enterprise comes from men, it will destroy itself of its

own accord. but if truly it comes from God, you will not succeed in destroying it."

**Q.** *You have been reproached with overestimating the domain of infallibility. Since the publication of this book, the German Jesuit Karl Rahner, who is not a conservative, considers you as a "liberal Protestant."*

**A.** It is regrettable that my friend Rahner did not discuss this book with me before publishing his critique. His accusations are not well-founded; besides he is going to publish a new article a good deal more nuanced. Neither in the first article nor in the second, does he demonstrate that the authorities of the church can make infallible statements. His method seems neo-scholastic to me. He bases himself on dogmas without asking himself how they are to be interpreted in the light of the Gospel message. He speculates on dogmas and attempts to adapt them to today's world. Our conflict is not that of a Catholic theologian and a Protestant theologian, but that of two theological methods. History will judge.

The essential question is this: What is the Catholic faith? You cannot reply only by enumerating I don't know how many propositions. There must be a rather radical change in the Christian existence itself. I don't think that it will be my book which provokes it. It has been coming for a long time. French theology, for example, accentuated the personalist aspect of faith—one believes in a person and not in some truths or propositions. . . . As for me, I struggle for a less rationalist and more existential Christianity.

**Q.** *The dogmas which have been taught as truths it was necessary to believe so as to have the faith—these seem placed in doubt. . . .*

**A.** In reality, there is only reflection on dogmas. Personally, I have nothing against dogmas. I have spoken very seriously of the possibility of definitions in certain urgent cases, when the church must define that which is Christian and that which is not.

But dogmas must not be considered the way jurists consider laws. Jurists do not reflect on the fashion in which the law is to be taken. They are content to apply it. Dogmas are not laws but "indicators," perhaps, which must be interpreted in the light of the Christian message itself.

**Q.** *Hans Küng, you are violently criticized in the church. Have you ever been tempted to quit it?*

**A.** I have had numerous temptations, never that of leaving the Catholic church. If I criticize it more than some others do, it is, on the contrary, a sign of profound adhesion.

Many people would be happy to see me leave the church. Certain ones wait for me to rejoin them on the outside. Others, within the church, desire my departure: they do not accept the notion of criticism from within. In *Civiltà Cattolica,* the old Jesuit review published in Rome, Father Rosa accuses me of heresy. They would like a new witchhunt.

Me? I feel the church is where I belong.



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# WILL HEALTH BEAT NIXON IN '72?

*A crisis isn't a crisis in America until it reaches the middle class*

**JIM CASTELLI**

The "Nation's Number One Doctor," Roger O. Egeberg, HEW Assistant for Health and Scientific Affairs, has never been invited to the White House, and observers await his imminent departure from office. Dr. Joseph T. English, former ranking career official in the federal government, has termed the Nixon Administration "callous" and "indifferent" to the nation's health needs.

The record of the Nixon Administration on health makes its controversial civil rights record look as if it were put together by Rap Brown. All this after the President himself predicted a complete breakdown of health care delivery unless drastic action were taken within two to three years; he made that prediction almost two years ago. Today, only 25 percent of all Americans receive top-flight medical care; 50 percent never had a comprehensive physical examination, and 50 million Americans would be no worse off with no medical care than they are with their present levels of care. Nine out of ten Americans are "medically indigent"—a serious or prolonged illness would cause them great financial sacrifice. While the Democrats are talking about National Health Insurance (NHI), Nixon is dispatching Undersecretary of HEW John Veneman to claim that such a program is "alien to our basic traditions." That AMA argument didn't hold up in the Medicare debate, and it holds up even less now in light of the President's own proposal for a guaranteed annual income.

Dr. English told the *New York Times* last fall that Nixon had decided to make his mark by stopping inflation and cutting government expenses. He reported that the Administration didn't give any thought to making an issue of health care because health was a "Democratic strategy" and "they couldn't find a way of making it a Republican strategy." Nixon's State of the Union Message showed that the President had reconsidered giving health a priority, possibly because of the predictions of *Business Week* columnist Clayton Fritchey and many others who believe that NHI will be an important plank in both party platforms in '72, and could possibly be the deciding factor. Before we examine Nixon's proposed reforms, however, we should understand a little more about the needs and forces involved.

While health may be a "Democratic strategy," the Democrats at large have been slow to make use of it. Many people were disappointed that so little mention of the health crisis was made in the '70 elections, as Democrats traded clichés about "the economy" for Republican clichés about "law and order." The growing health crisis is the one issue that could reunite the New Deal coalition of liberals, labor, minorities and the poor which kept the Democrats in power for so long. In fact, the very definition of "health," "the complete physical, mental, and social well-being of an individual," virtually begs to be made into a Democratic campaign theme.

Health has traditionally been thought of as a problem of the poor; even many of the poor who have Medicaid lack anything near proper medical care. Perhaps those with the most benefit from NHI would be the "nearly poor" who are employed, but who don't qualify for Medicaid and can't afford private insurance. But the middle class is becoming more and more interested in NHI, and it is their complaint that is probably responsible for the surge of concern about NHI; a crisis isn't a crisis in America until it reaches the middle class.

Labor has been a prime mover for NHI, which is its "Number One Priority"; George Meany has said that labor will do anything short of commiting an illegal act to get NHI. According to Meany, labor's major interests in health are preventive medicine, the best possible treatment for all Americans, and keeping the cost of medical care at a reasonable rate so that people aren't denied needed health care simply because they can't afford it.

The AFL-CIO has announced its support for an NHI bill introduced in the House by Martha Griffiths (D.-Mich.) and in the Senate by Edward M. Kennedy. The bill, based on recommendations made by the Walter Reuther-led Committee of 100 on National Health Insurance, provides for comprehensive coverage for everyone who has lived in the U.S. for one year; benefits including unlimited hospitalization; physician service including surgery, subject to a $2 cost-sharing fee for each visit after the first one; preventive care and physical examinations; unlimited nursing home care; home health services ($2 cost-sharing); rehabilitative service;

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comprehensive dental care for all children under 16 ($2 cost-sharing); eye care; and prescription drugs. These benefits would be financed under Social Security, with the employee contributing one percent of his salary, and the employer and government each paying three percent.

There are practical gains to be made by both labor and management with NHI. Management has favored NHI as a means of stabilizing inflationary insurance costs; labor could bargain for this same savings as part of a wage increase. But even considering this, members of most unions are still receiving inadequate care and meeting high out-of-pocket expenses.

This is why proposals which would merely extend Medicaid coverage could not work. In addition to extending past mistakes, such a program could only widen the gulf between the poor and the middle class, who can afford medical care only slightly better than the poor. If these two groups cannot work together, there can be no far-reaching reform in America, whether in health care or in anything else.

### *Behind the Crisis*

One class of medical care for all Americans, paid for out of general revenues, and free at the point of entrance into the health care delivery system, is not just a pipedream of radicals in the health field—it is the only practical solution to the problem. Dr. Harry Becker, Associate Professor of Community Medicine at Albert Einstein School of Medicine in New York, claims that with the proper reorganization of the system we could have had twice the quantity health care, and better quality care, for the $60 billion we spent on health in 1969. Becker, who also teaches a course in "The New Politics of Health" at the New School for Social Research, notes that the desire for NHI is growing faster than the realization that drastic changes must be made in the system to make NHI work.

That reorganization, not provided for in the Griffiths bill, includes strict cost and quality controls, administration by HEW, not the private insurance companies, and a rational planning and organization of health facilities.

While 85 percent of all Americans have some sort of health insurance coverage, 99.5 percent have no dental coverage; 90.4 percent have no nursing home coverage; 60 percent have no out-of-hospital prescription drug insurance; 58 percent aren't covered for private duty nursing care; 58 percent aren't covered for doctors' visits; 54.5 percent aren't covered for visiting nurse service; 51 percent aren't covered for x-ray or lab costs; 36 percent aren't covered for in-hospital doctors' visits; 26.4 percent have no surgeon's fees coverage; and 24 percent have no hospital care coverage.

The major complaint against the private insurance companies is that they contribute to inflation, and protect themselves and the hospitals, but not the consumer. They offer the least coverage for the most common situations, such as maternity and dental care, and for lingering illnesses, areas where help is needed the most.

Blue Cross has the power to control medical inflation by limiting its rates, but it does not do so. It pays hospitals on a cost-plus basis: hospitals submit their "cost" for services provided, and Blue Cross pays a slightly higher amount. Differences in cost of over 100 percent between two hospitals for identical services illustrate the imperfections of this system. If Blue Cross will pay whatever the hospitals ask, there is no incentive for cost control or greater efficiency.

In addition, critics of Blue Cross point out that subscribers also pay for public relations staffs; labor relations men who fight unionization among non-professionals, keeping wages low, but creating a situation with a 60 percent personnel turnover yearly, and increased retraining costs; they also pay for empty beds that aren't needed, beds filled by the one in five patients who doesn't need to be in a hospital, and for prestigious, but expensive, machines which go largely unused, and which often duplicate facilities at a nearby hospital.

The Reuther plan is the only NHI proposal that goes into cost and quality controls, but its critics fear that much of this (such as administration by HEW) will be compromised early when a vote nears. They maintain that if we begin with the Reuther plan, we will end up with quite a bit less, and that to even end up with the far from perfect Reuther plan, we must be aware of all of the things it *doesn't* do.

In addition to the problem of the private insurance companies, cost control is needed to curb the unwarranted excess profits of the "medical-industrial-complex," which includes the hospitals, solo practitioners and the equipment and drug dealers. Prescription drugs are a $2 billion a year business, and $800 million of that goes into public relations and advertising. Most brand-name prescription drugs cost many times what they would cost when purchased under generic names. Radicals maintain that by eliminating these excesses, NHI can be kept inexpensive enough to be made workable. Actually, health radicals don't talk in terms of NHI, but in terms of a National Health System which would be totally different from our present "non-system."

In order to make such a system viable, the solo practitioner and the fee-for-service system would have to go. Group practice, which is partially provided for by the Griffiths bill, is a far more efficient and economic form of health care, but incentives must be built in to attract doctors to group practice, and away from the $53,800 *median* income of solo practitioners. If the two exist side by side, as they do in England, the cost of group practice rises to keep up with fee-for-service prices, and the inflationary spiral begins all over again.



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## Ecology & Urban Renewal

. . . A technological innovation—the supersonic transport, for instance—affects many crucial areas of social life: pollution by fumes and by noise, airport congestion, public monies for highways to carry traffic to and from the planes, and so on. Therefore the major programs of all corporations should be tested for social consequence by an independent public agency. If we do not allow drug manufacturers to market a new product without first checking on its effect on health, we can no longer allow other industries to unilaterally impose their priorities on the nation. And "beneficial use" should be the criterion, not just for water, but for technology in general . . .

We cannot allow the environment to become a substitute for the struggle against poverty and urban blight. It must be an aid to it. . . . The democratic Left must insist that this entire new effort require that the burgeoning anti-pollution industry hire the unemployed and underemployed poor with special emphasis on the minorities, and that the location of facilities take social, as well as economic considerations into account.

We have already discovered through the "new careers" program that poor people can make effective contributions to the economy without a great deal of expensive training so long as jobs are designed for them (rather, so to speak, than "designing" them for the job). If there is now going to be a vanguard industry which does not now have a vested interest in the old ways, that provides a marvelous opportunity to redeem some of our promises to the poor, the blacks, and the Spanish-speaking—to do so by giving the entire society a better place to live. In other words, we must be as concerned about the social effect of fighting pollution and not just about technology.

"The Politics of Pollution"—Michael Harrington
COMMONWEAL, April 17, 1970

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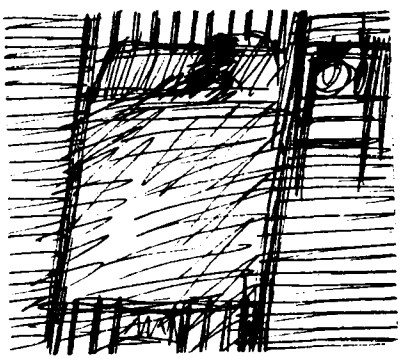
The AMA has persisted in asserting that health care is a privilege, not a right, but the opposition to this attitude is summed up well by I. W. Abel, president of the United Steelworkers of America and of the Industrial Union Dept. of the AFL-CIO: "People are getting fed up with . . . the greed of the drug companies, just as they are becoming more alarmed over zooming hospital costs and doctors' fees. Promotion and protection of the health of the American people should not automatically mean wealth for the people who provide the services and the products. In brief, people should not become wealthy just because they keep other people healthy."

While group practice has been viewed as a panacea by many, most medical schools deal with it only briefly as an elective. With its emphasis on preventive medicine and keeping healthy, group practice is doubtlessly efficient, but because the emphasis on keeping people *out*



of the hospital lends itself to abuse, as it has in the past, strict quality controls are necessary. Definite standards should be set and enforced by HEW and the local community.

The switch to group practice is only one of the structural changes needed if the health care delivery system is to survive. Two other major problems are the shortage of health manpower, and the maldistribution of existing personnel. There are three times as many doctors in the affluent suburbs as there are in the ghettos, and there are many communities which have no doctor at all. The shortening of the medical training period, increased use of interns with the community and the use of various para-professionals can help improve the situation somewhat.

All of these and other needed changes form the backdrop for what appears to be Richard Nixon's plan for the Vietnamization of the health care crisis. Barbara Ehrenriech, a staff member of the Health Policy Advisory Center in New York, a leader in the movement for a National Health System, analyzed federal health policy in a recent Health-PAC Bulletin, and found that Nixon planned token, stop-gap reforms which would stop the drive for NHI. He would spend as little extra money as possible, and that money would be funneled into the private insurance companies.



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While the details have not yet been finalized, Mrs. Ehrenreich found that the Administration was planning a "three-layered cake" plan: ". . . Medicaid would be scrapped and replaced by a system of federal payment of premiums for *private* health insurance for welfare recipients. For the 'near poor,' (those who are 'medically indigent' but not on welfare) the government would offer partial subsidy of the cost of private health insurance. For the middle class, most of which already has private insurance coverage for hospital costs, the government would offer 'some financial relief.' This relief will probably take the form of federal subsidies to insurance companies to enable them to stabilize the costs of their insurance policies."

While no Administration official has yet publicly used the "three-layered cake" terminology, Mrs. Ehrenreich's predictions have been accurate. The "relief" for the middle class consists of a proposal that employers pay a minimum of 75 percent of the cost of private insurance with some improved benefits. Nixon's whole plan still rests on the private insurance companies, who have shown themselves either unwilling or unable to meet the needs of the health care system. As for the poor who will be taken off Medicaid and given the same inadequate private coverage most of the rest of us have, (and for which they will have the "dignity" of paying part of the cost—the White House press release slips in "no cost sharing for families with incomes below $3000 for a family of four") Mrs. Ehrenreich says the Nixon proposals may as well be called the "let-them-eat-cake" plan.

The second part of Nixon's intended reform is an emphasis on Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO's), arrangements similar to group practice in which a group of doctors will be given a grant by the government to pay for the health care of a specific population. (At first, those on Medicare, and then Medicaid and some non-Medicare patients.) Efficiency would be rewarded by profits resulting from the difference between the amount of the grant and the actual cost of the care. Assuming that better and more efficient care costs less, the emphasis, as in all group practice, is on keeping the patient out of the hospital; if the costs of care exceed the grant level, the doctors must absorb the costs themselves.

The main problems here are that the HMO's would be run by the local medical societies, which are just as conservative as the AMA, and that HEW "explicitly seeks to avoid interference with the internal arrangements of health maintenance organizations." This means no cost control, no quality control, and no community control. Mrs. Ehrenreich concludes that "As conceived by the Administration and the medical societies, HMO's are potential fortresses for the preservation of fee-for-service medical practice. For—underneath all the pious talk about prepayment and group practice—the HMO's are simply a bookkeeping arrangement designed to give doctors an interest in cutting down on hospital use. In forming HMO's, the medical societies gain profits and the prestige about 'doing something' about the health care crisis. At best, the consumer will notice no change at all. At worst, he will find doctors tending to undertreat, perhaps even to neglect his ills—all in the name of health maintenance."

According to Mrs. Ehrenreich, the HMO's may fulfill their ultimate purpose, which, says Paul Ellwood, the HEW consultant who created the HMO, is "to quiet the clamor for national health insurance . . . and to reverse the trend towards greater government involvement in the health system."

Nixon's proposals aren't all bad: he's correct in noting that "In the final analysis, each individual bears the major responsibility for his own health." An emphasis on preventive medicine and preventive education is vital, as are attacks on cancer and sickle cell anemia. But an individual cannot fulfill his responsibility for his own health if the mechanisms for the financing of health care work against him.

### *Cost Consciousness*

Nixon shows his true attitude with his emphasis on "cost consciousness," his rationalization for the deductible and co-insurance features which led Leonard Woodcock to call his program "a cruel hoax." Nixon maintains that "only as people are aware of costs will they be motivated to reduce them. When consumers pay virtually nothing for services, and when, at the same time, those who provide services know that all of *their* costs will also be met, then neither the consumer nor the provider has an incentive to use the system efficiently."

The greatest tragedy is that the simplest deductible feature demanding the outlay of X dollars will still present a financial hardship for many families, just as many others will still be restrained from getting the care they need. But there is also a basic dishonesty in this approach. Both Nixon's proposals and the more radical programs would depend basically on group practice, which by definition rewards efficiency and penalizes inefficiency; and, secondly, no one today is naive enough to believe he is getting anything for free when he knows it will come out of his paycheck in one form or another, as either premiums or taxes.

We have once again seen the Nixon "rhetoric gap"—the gap between the "Now or Never" rhetoric and the featherweight programs; the rhetoric of the President's speech on health care could have come from HealthPAC; the programs could have come from the AMA.

Nixon has once again sided with the moneyed interests against the "people." But he has also shown, in his emphasis on cost consciousness, a basic difference between the liberal and the conservative in the broadest



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sense of the words: the conservative will penalize the whole in order to punish the few abusers; the liberal will let the few get away with something if it will benefit the whole.

If the Democrats can educate themselves and the public about the need for real, and not paper reform, they can take advantage of the fact that by treating the health care crisis as just one more nuisance to be run through the White House options mill, Nixon will have reunited the New Deal coalition as no single Democrat could.

And if he does, he will have lost at his own game. For someone who has built a career feeding on people's fears, Nixon really blew this one. For America's greatest fear is not the "Red Menace," crime in the streets, or even student dissenters. It is the fear of an illness that should have been prevented, that will bring exposure to inadequate medical care and that will take a lifetime to pay for.

**KNEE DEEP**

# THE SCREEN

It isn't every day (or week or month, as a matter of fact) that we have a film as good as *Claire's Knee* to mull over. Because of my fondness for director-writer Eric Rohmer's 1970 movie, *My Night at Maud's,* I approached his new release with great expectations, perhaps too great; I found myself not warming up to *Claire* as I did to *Maud*. This is odd because *Claire* is another entry in Rohmer's series called *Six Moral Tales* and has a theme somewhat similar to that in *Maud*. Rohmer has made it clear that all six in his Moral Tales series will follow the same line. "Just as the narrator is in pursuit of a woman who, momentarily, seems to elude him, events bring him in contact with another. And, regardless of the charm and persuasion of the second, he will reject her in favor of the first, even when he is not yet assured of her possession." So went the story in *Maud,* and so goes the plot of *Claire.*

The main character in *Claire* is Jerome, a French diplomat in his thirties and engaged to a woman with whom he has lived for several years—and whom we never see. Jerome is expertly played by Jean-Claude Brialy as a man who takes himself very seriously and is a touch on the stuffy side. While visiting an old friend, novelist Aurora Cornu (played by the novelist Aurora Cornu) in Annecy, France, near the Swiss border, he agrees to let the novelist make him a character in the book she is writing. When sixteen-year-old Laura begins to fall in love with Jerome, the novelist's book and our film begin to take shape.

As with *Maud, Claire* is very talkative, and, although most of the talk is brilliant, my eyes became fatigued from reading sub-titles. But *Claire* is never dull. Pictorially it is always beautiful—with Nestor Almendros' stunning color photography of this lake region and surrounding mountains and of the handsome cast. Laura, played to perfection by Beatrice Romand, seems to grow up before our eyes as Jerome rejects her in favor of Claire, a beautiful girl whose knees become an obsession for Jerome.

*Claire's Knee* is about ways of love, the eccentricities of love—and I mean love, not just sex. The bevies of attractive girls in *Claire,* swimming or boating, or partying in groups or just being attractive, reminded me at times of that section of Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* called *Within a Budding Grove.*

While I enjoyed *Claire's Knee* and admire its good cast and photography, as well as Eric Rohmer's direction, I still find myself preferring *My Night at Maud's,* in which I always knew what scriptwriter Rohmer was getting at. In *Claire,* he goes out of his way to be diffuse at times. Perhaps Rohmer wanted to be somewhat vague. Aren't people? And he wanted us to bring to it and take from it what *we* wanted to bring and take. I didn't bring and take as I did with *Maud,* but *Claire* stands on its own feet, and is a first-rate film on its own.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG

ROBERT BEUM

## *THE SOURCES*

This wall, that bridge, the structure of lines
We build and rebuild thinking the years
May shiver against them and find there
As in wall and bridge the heart's model,
All precision, all generous blood—
Shining of sources, of the Masters
And their suns, girls, flowers, horses, whales.

The fire storms that cooled into a sun
Printed with sunflowers and horses
And whales and rides down morning and mind,
The little tributaries to air—
Warm with depending, gladly not free
In the independent cold, sometimes
On a lonely day we ride like gods

And ride out in sidereal time,
Nothing less, on its horses and whales,
And would ride to creation's outskirts,
To the least underpinnings, dark suns
In the darkness praised only by God.
You hidden girds and little wellsprings,
Shine in our staves: we ride to your praise.



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# BOOKS

***Decadence and morbidity—a certain weakness, a certain comfort***

## *Letters*

THOMAS MANN

*Knopf, $17.50*

**JEFFREY MEYERS**

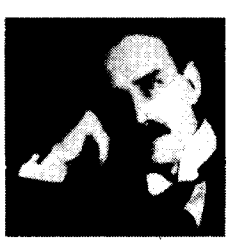
*The higher a man is, the more he lives under the influence of demons, and he must be careful not to let his guiding will be led astray. In my acquaintance with Schiller something demonic was clearly at work.*
*—Goethe*

In a letter on his demonic *Doctor Faustus,* Thomas Mann wrote that "I have a certain weakness for decadence and feel quite at home in morbidity, taking a kind of pride in an insider's knowledge." Throughout his long, brilliant and immensely productive career Mann cultivated pathology for intellectual, poetic and symbolic ends. Nietzsche's theory of the creative conflict between the Dionysian and Apollonian spirit, between frenzy, intoxification, mystery and control, tranquility, radiance, became a paradigm for most of Mann's heroes: from Aschenbach, Siegmund and Spinnell, who surrender to the voluptuousness of doom in the early stories, to that possessed genius, Adrian Leverkühn, who rivals the achievement of Beethoven and inevitably ends in madness.

The contrast Mann liked to make in his essays between Goethe and Schiller, Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky, between the Olympian and the demonic personality, who are contrary but not remote and who often come into contact like extremes that meet, took fictional form in the powerful polarity of Settembrini and Naphtha, whose dialectic could be resolved only by death and transfiguration. In Mann's early works, like *Tonio Kröger,* the isolated artist is estranged from a basically healthy society, but in his apocalyptic novels, *The Magic Mountain* and *Doctor Faustus,* society itself is sick, and its decline and destruction is allegorized in the climactic events of the books: in the thunderclap of war that recalls Hans Castorp from his hermetic, enchanted pedagogy and in the catastrophic breakdown of Adrian that corresponds to the collapse of Nazi Germany.

*The Magic Mountain* was Mann's last purely creative work, for after this *Bildungsroman* he turned to mythology and the Bible in the Joseph tetralogy; to the lives of Goethe, Nietzsche and St. Gregory in *The Beloved Returns, Doctor Faustus* and *The Holy Sinner;* and finally to the *Felix Krull* fragment, abandoned for forty years, which he continued on the very same page of manuscript. And he regularly threw off complementary literary essays like stars from a sun.

Mann's extraordinarily impressive career can be traced in his *letters,* which provide illumination about his personal, public and political life:



from his early and elusive homosexual friendship, his sisters' suicides and his bitter quarrel with his brother Heinrich about Germany's role in the Great War (they were later reconciled), to his rich family life, his Nobel Prize and then his sudden "angina of exile" from Germany in 1933.

When Mann, the most influential exile, settled in Los Angeles in 1940 after several years in Switzerland and Princeton (where he was Einstein's friend and neighbor), his house "became a rescue bureau for people in danger, people crying for help, people going under," and he responded to these pressing pleas with a constant courage and generosity. In the early 1950's he began to sense ominous parallels between the political atmosphere of the Nixon-Mundt-McCarthy Communist witchhunts and the Germany he had fled two decades earlier. Driven from his Baudelairean "artificial paradise" in California by unfair and malicious political attacks, he returned to Zurich in 1952 and died there three years later at the age of eighty.

Mann admits "a great timidity about directly autobiographical writing" and he appears with the restraint, reserve, decorum and dignity that exemplify his patrician background and deep sense of tradition. The excellent editors are hardly justified in claiming that "very few of the letters were written with any thought of publication" for Mann had a perfectly clear idea of himself as a public posthumous figure, and even the most devoted Manniacs would agree that his more formal utterances suggest the unveiling of a public statue. The letters do not have Mann's characteristically subtle irony; there is no passionate self-revelation as in the great letters of Keats and Lawrence; and the demons that haunt Mann's fiction have been thoroughly exorcised by his cautious daughter, Erika, who edited the German edition.

The best of these 540 letters, which represent only 40 percent of three volumes in German and about 2-3 percent of all the letters he wrote, are those which pierce through Mann's protective formality. In 1918 he writes to Heinrich Mann with considerable bitterness:

> Let the tragedy of our brotherhood unfold. Sorrow? It is bearable. One grows hard and apathetic. Ever since Carla killed herself and you broke with Lula [another sister] for life, such ruptures are nothing new in our family circle. This is not the kind of life I care for. I despise it. But one must live it to the end, as well as one can.



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In an explosive response to his persistent, difficult and sometimes unpleasant patroness, Agnes Meyer, whose attitude toward Mann seems to resemble that of Mabel Dodge Luhan toward Lawrence, Mann states impatiently: "I have suffered bitterly and long from your having nothing but feelings of scorn and rejection for my children, for after all I love these children, by the same right that you love your children." And after the suicide of his talented son Klaus in 1949, he confesses to his close friend Hermann Hesse, "My relationship to him was difficult, and not without feelings of guilt, for my very existence cast a shadow on him from the start." Despite occasional *longueurs,* these letters, like Mann's novels, have a powerful cumulative effect. They reveal a man of magnanimity and intelligence whose mind, harnessing the threatening demons, remained creative and alert until the final hour.


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## *Women's Liberation and the Church*

SARAH BENTLEY DOELY, EDIT.

*Association Press, $5.95; paper $2.95*

**SALLY CUNNEEN**

From Simone de Beauvoir through Betty Friedan to the exotic feminist flowering of the present the implication has persisted that religious women have been the chief victims, often the co-conspirators, in short the genuine suckers for the male chauvinist put-down.

Is it any wonder? Throughout the nineteenth century the harsh legal and social facts were buttressed by Christian mythology. "The power of woman is her dependence, flowing from the consciousness of the weakness which God has given her for her protection," reads the Pastoral Letter from the Council of Congregationalist Ministers of Massachusetts in 1836 designed to stop the audacious Grimké sisters from rallying Christian women on behalf of the slaves as well as women's rights. "But when she assumes the place and tone of man as a public reformer . . . she yields the power which God has given her for her protection, and her character becomes unnatural."

In response, Sarah Grimké accepted some of her opponent's presuppositions, which she did not share, in order to appeal to their morality: "Adam's ready acquiescence with his wife's proposal does not savor much of that superiority in *strength of mind* which is arrogated by man. Even admitting that Eve was the greater sinner, it seems to me that man might be satisfied with the dominion he has claimed and exercised for nearly 6000 years, and that more true nobility would be manifested by endeavoring to raise the fallen and invigorate the weak than by keeping women in subjection." (Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle*)

Have we come such a long way, baby? Is the opposition very different among churchmen today? Do we have champions whose arguments are more learned, their lives more dedicated than those a century ago? I think not. Churchmen notoriously used their influence to prevent equality for women socially and economically and are still dong it in more subtle fashion. Despite them, society at length granted the vote, provided the laws and the jobs, made the pants suits.

Today, as a consequence, there are *many* women within the churches able to state their case, no longer to abolish laws which treated them as property or as minors, but to explain how they have been kept from full participation in the life of the church, and why this is bad for them and the church alike.

*Women's Liberation and the Church* is perhaps the first book to provide documentation of the widespread, ecumenical nature of such attitudes among articulate, involved Christian women. The introduction by editor Sarah Bentley Doely sets the serious, positive tone of the contributors: "Deep concern and honest faith have prompted them to speak out against an institution which receives their offers of commitment with difficulty and restraint."

Davida Foy Crabtree (most of the married women use both names) sounds programmatic and very Women's Lib Org in her lead article demanding child-care centers, courses in self-defense, and repeal of all abortion laws. Her analysis of the problem bears the simplistic stamp of the young and historically naive. Better to have begun with the Tiresias of the Christian woman's movement, Rosemary Ruether, who follows with a far-seeing analysis of "Women's Lib in Historical and Theological Perspective," an able sequel to her extraordinarily prophetic essay on "The Becoming of Woman" (*Cross Currents,* Fall '67).

While never underestimating the importance of the woman question: ("The domination of women is the most fundamental form of domination in society, and all other forms of domination, whether of race, class or ethnic group draw upon the fantasies of sexual domination"), Ruether sees it always in a human, historical perspective. This does not mean "That all women are necessarily worse off materially or



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more exploited, in the crudely physical sense of the word, than other groups, but rather that the fundamental meaning of human alienation and the subjection of one person to another, as well as the overcoming of alienation in true reciprocity and communication, finds its most fundamental existential expression here, although it may be expressed in cruder and more obvious forms in relation to racial or class exploitation."

A reminiscence by Sidney Callahan takes us off the mountaintop into the individual psyche. She explains how she can be both a feminist and a Christian—indeed, why the former follows from the latter. Her stance also involves certain conflicts, however, including rejection of "abortion on demand." The differences between her attitude and that of other Christians suggest the value of further discussions along ecumenical lines.

The other Catholic contribution is a section of the charter of the IHM nuns in California, a gently courageous proposal for community within and without the order. The reaction of the Curia to this charter insured that it would be without canonical approval at any rate, so the sisters have become a lay group. Their problems are at least analogous to those of the Protestant women seminarians and ministers whose contributions make up the rest of the book. Like Mrs. Ruether and Mrs. Callahan, most Catholic women have related to the feminist movement in society directly. The Protestant women have been involved in a more complex situation, and their experiences in the seminaries and parishes suggest that they have related through the church, darkly.

Susan Copenhaver Barrabee writes amusingly and perceptively how an honest course on Women's Lib could shake up Drew Theological School. Nora Ramsey Jones tells of her own problem in "finding her place" in the ministry, and records the genuine fear she encounters among churchmen before the feminine presence.

The last article by Peggy Ann Way shows originality and insight. She dis-


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*The Kirkus Reviews




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avows the usual bases of authority for her own ministry: *not* the Scriptures (she doesn't want them rewritten for any cause); *not* church history and *not* church structure. The authority she does claim is that of possibility rooted in her own human searching and the response of those who accept her ministry.

Besides the articles, the book contains a good bibliography and an appendix with a number of resolutions and position papers. These include the statement of the women's caucus at the 1969 meeting of the National Council of Churches, the results of sex-role stereotyping in the United Methodist nursery curriculum (even three-year-old girls are shown as passive, unhappy, the victims of their own emotions. They are afraid of turtles, and teacher or little Jimmy has to help them open their purses), and the strong proposal made by the National Conference on the Role of Women in Theological Education in May 1970 for a research center for women at the Boston Theological Institute.

The book is useful documentation for those who are interested: most of these women believe their churches will be. Peggy Way thinks there are "no free men among the creators of the present church." The problems of the churches are, she believes, very much related to masculine identity problems. Churchmen "esteem women highly; they just don't want any around." But the authors of this book care too much about the churches to leave them alone.


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## *Five Variations on the Theme of Japanese Painting*

LEO BRONSTEIN

*The Bond Wheelwright Company, $17.50*

**PAMELA RITTERMAN**

On the cover of *Five Variations on the Theme of Japanese Painting,* a wonderful picture: detail from "The Walking Cranes," by Korin. Five cranes in a row, marching, simple pleasure in the repetition of legs, necks, beaks, an elegant pattern of multiple forms. But one crane, the moment before, has just dipped his long neck down—a criss-cross, the elegance spoiled, as a family photograph when the little child sticks his tongue out just as the shutter snaps—no, not ruined, rather, as Professor Bronstein, would say, a "new fish," a "monster," something surprising and, yes, a little bit comic, no longer graceful, a confrontation or a meeting, the first meeting on the journey of this extraordinary book.

First, then, to speak about the pictures. This is a book that can actually teach one about looking at paintings—somehow without the oppressive compulsion that books about art or poetry usually have, the reader's nasty nagging fear that he might not be "getting" it, the intimidating sanctity of the "aesthetic experience." It is by no means an easy book; it is demanding, staggeringly erudite, sometimes needlessly obscure, its language alternately rhapsodic and technical. Yet the first reward, the one that keeps the reader from quitting, is that the pictures become explicable. One feels real wonder at honestly having seen something new, rather than the more usual relief at having, after all, "made it" into the elite circle of knowers and understanders.

Professor Bronstein's book may be described in many ways: as a sound, systematic treatise on certain epistemological problems in apprehending works of art; an overheated, self-indulgent hodge-podge of memories, old letters, imaginary dialogues, what the author calls "history without proof"; a brilliant theoretical discussion of art, that manages to surpass both the Marxist analysis of true and false consciousness and the Freudian doctrine of sublimation, while never discounting the great insights of these theories; even, an excellent introductory text on Japanese painting.

It is true that one will not learn much in the way of historical fact—just when the Momoyama period began or the Fujiwara ended—but will gain a sense of uniqueness of the social, political and artistic history of Japan. Although he concedes its importance, Professor Bronstein does not concentrate on China's influence on Japan, as does most conventional art criticism. Rather, he concentrates on what he sees as uniquely Japanese: the religions of Shinto and Amidism, the brutal history of the shogunates, Japan's abrupt opening and closings to foreign influence. His terms (both literal and metaphoric) for those qualities he considers most Japanese are a belief in ghosts, and a sense of dance.

To describe these two constructs here would be almost impossible, however, for most of *Five Variations* is devoted to expanding on these and similar themes, hence the hodge-podge aspect of the book. It is not a linear production, rather, as the author writes, "the medieval searcher's *arbor Porphyriana* method, a branching out of events, forward and backward, from a freely selected trunk. . . ." In order to illustrate distinctions as important as they are subtle, Professor Bronstein employs all sorts of devices, from writing an original Noh play, to reprinting a set of letters he received from "a gentle and learned Japanese lady" during his researches for this book. Most probably, individual readers will differ as to which devices they find helpful, for the "branching" method extends to some very distant places. I found the



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Japanese lady's letter about Max Beckmann and heraldry almost entirely opaque, but her comments on Professor Bronstein's theories were among the most instructive in the book.

But Japan, its art and history, are not the only subjects of this book. Professor Bronstein also writes of America, about what he calls a "crisis," "an epoch-making change in the attitude of man." The lessons he has learned from Japanese art have to do with an everyday sense of dance and the body, and in part, this book is an effort to communicate these lessons to an American readership. His characterization of the crisis is passionate, written in a style with which the sympathetic reader must learn to come to grips:

> This . . . is now coextensive—in its ever-expanding 'pooling of experience' motive-action—not with the moral *qualities* of its increase, but with the moral *quantity* therein: more and more and more, all over the world— simply this! simply the change, the crisis, the monster we despise and are desperate about and reject as today's vulgarity incarnate!

It is with this statement of its dream that the book severs ties with academic respectability ("The vulgar-sentimental, materialist-command, 'More and more and more people to have their daily, easier bread' is as spiritual as . . . the Bodhisattva's vow . . .") and becomes politically subversive because it is entirely democratic. Yet the democratic dream remains merely a dream, I think, a true and beautiful fantasy inspired by intimations of freedom in the painting of Japan. There is no effort made to relate this dream to an historical structure of active struggle for change.

A fault I find with *Five Variations* is its almost coy attempt to preserve the illusion of extreme originality, to retain an idiosyncratic vocabulary while the author is left to wonder how closely it is all related to Marxist historical theory, for example. This is where the author succumbs to the academic habit of mystification.

The book is also simply too difficult. A book about real communal democracy, as this one very beautifully is, should be written in a language that is available to more people. The struggle involved in dealing with Professor Bronstein's crisis will include learning a new vocabulary and set of references. It is incorrect to assume that artistic subtleties must be described in terms of thousands of years of elitist cultural production. There *is* a new shared vocabulary that must be learned, a new vulgar tongue, no doubt monstrous, but a responsibility conferred by the crisis.

### *Blaming the Victim*

WILLIAM RYAN

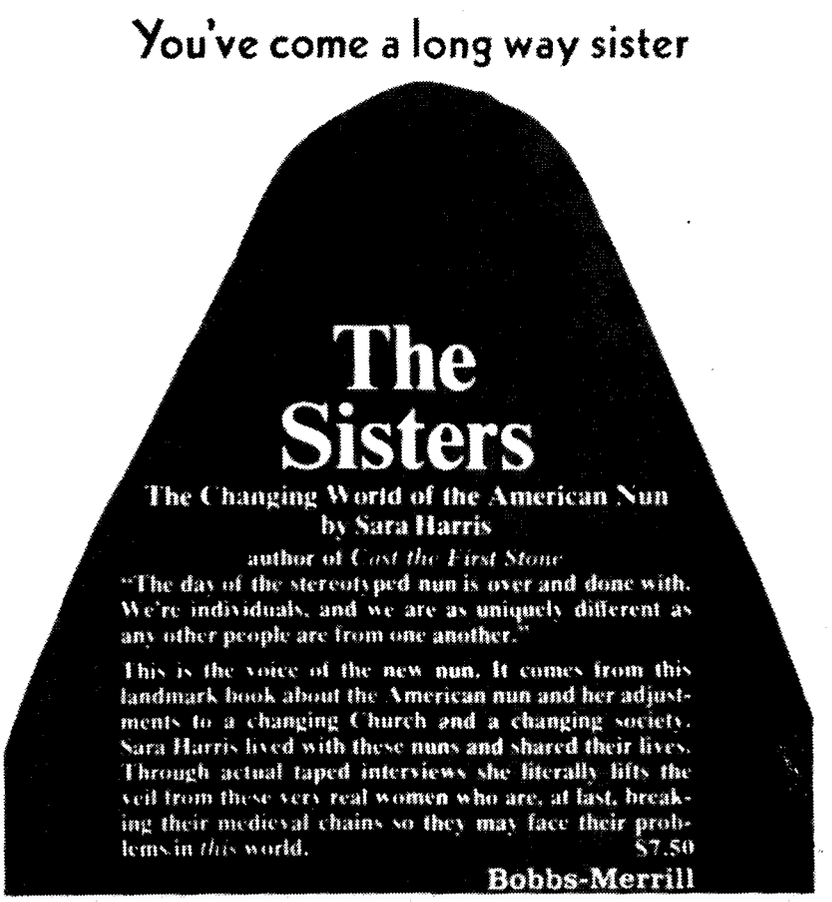
*Pantheon, $6.95*

**MAURICE R. BERUBE**

William Ryan has written a powerful antidote to the conventional academic wisdom on poverty. This book successfully demolishes those liberal paternalistic myths of the poor, now in fashion, that are latent in the works of such academics as Daniel Moynihan, and blatant in the works of men like Edward Banfield. Every poverty warrior, social worker and urban school teacher who has plunged into Banfield's benign neglect theories in *The Unheavenly City* should be required by law to read *Blaming the Victim*. For Ryan corrects mistaken notions that the poor, somehow, are responsible for their poverty.

During the '50s, liberals were content to believe that the few poor were happy and somehow singularly blessed; in the '60s, with the rediscovery of large-scale poverty, liberals accepted the basis that environment produced incalculable physical and psychological damage to the poor. However, they were all too ready to accept the subtle implication that this destructive environment still largely was caused by the poor; the fault was not in the stars but in the poor themselves.

Ryan first struck this theme some years ago in a devastating blast on the Moynihan study of black families,



You've come a long way sister
The Sisters
The Changing World of the American Nun
by Sara Harris
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which became almost as celebrated as the report itself. According to Ryan, Moynihan's description of the fractured black family implied that blacks, because of immorality, were the cause of family instability rather than the poisonous legacy of slavery. The controversy seemed a draw; both protagonists scored points. But, in time, Ryan was vindicated. More and more racists and white paternalists seized on the very weakness of the Moynihan report that Ryan had concentrated on. They explained away active opposition to reform in schools, welfare and housing on the basis of the Moynihan report: the black poor were inferior, they argued, because of their poverty and broken families, which was so, because they were inferior. This circular illogic rendered the Moynihan study suspect.

In *Blaming the Victim,* Ryan elevates his critique of Moynihan to a general counter-theory on academic conceptions of poverty. He pursues his singular thesis with a savagery of his own to education, housing, health, crime and social science, in general. In education, he says, we end up blaming the poor youngster for failing to learn, rather than the middle class teacher who does not expect the child to learn; in housing, we blame the poor tenant for the deplorable conditions in slum tenements rather than the slum landlord who neglects to maintain his property; in crime, we blame the poor lawbreaker rather than his poverty and apply a double standard to organized crime and white collar crimes; in welfare, we blame the black girl with illegitimate children for promiscuity rather than the limited options of the poor, which are open to the daughters of the middle class, such as contraception, abortion, forced marriage, and adoption.

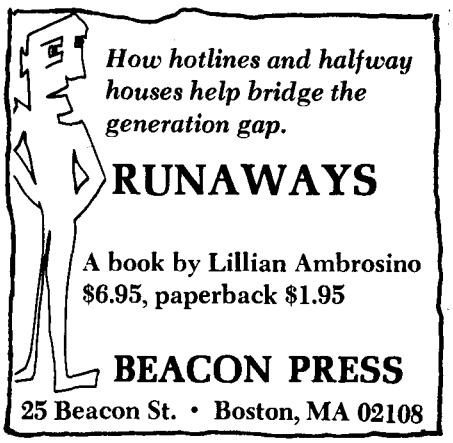
Ryan makes his case well. He arranges his material in a highly readable form, free from academese, and has enough facts to satisfy a trial lawyer. We discover, for example, that in the model city of New Haven, some 5,000 slum units were razed through urban renewal, displacing the poor, and that only 12 low income units were built to replace them. And one must remember that urban renewal was a program espoused by liberals and not conservatives.

Still, Ryan's angle of vision is limited.. That is not to disparage his value. His forte is in challenging mistaken assumptions of our liberal social scientists, rather than promoting a new conception of the causes of poverty. In that respect, *Blaming the Victim* makes its message heard loud and clear. It is a reminder of how few alternatives the poor have; they are truly prisoners of their circumstances rather than creators of their own lifestyle—a culture of poverty—that many believe. And Ryan rightfully concludes that this victimization can only be remedied through money and power; money to provide freedom from want, and power to provide freedom to affect the policies that determine one's life.

The defects of the book are small, more the result of style than substance. Ryan has a penchant for shock, and his striving for this effect sometimes leads him astray. Although I wholly agree with his critique of the Coleman Report, for example—an undue emphasis on the social background of pupils—I recoil from his conclusion that the study resulted in "dozens of gratuitous speculations and preconceptions formulated and virtually no light shed on the subject." Although Ryan's reasoning is impeccable—and highly original—his conclusion is too harshly worded. Despite Coleman's narrow intellectual baggage, he did report some contrary and confused evidence, which cut against the grain of his own thinking giving us some insight into the mystery of learning. These lapses are few, but they do mar one of the best books on poverty published in recent years.

One wishes that Ryan had continued the probe of the implications of the victim-blaming psychology. He does hint at its religious, specifically Calvinistic, overtones, but does not linger. But then, of course, the impact of Calvinism on our social science is a book in itself.

Ryan's critics have replied that his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debunking of such as Moynihan, in turn, gives the impression that poverty has had no damaging effect on the poor. He does have a tendency to downgrade the damage inflicted by poverty. That, I suspect, is but a side effect of his single minded concentration on the disastrous social implications of liberal paternalism. For Ryan, at his best, is mainly an academic counter-puncher, and he *is* at his best in *Blaming the Victim*. The only disappointment is that the book was not published years earlier, when the nation seemed more seriously inclined towards social reform. But, then, Ryan might have been ahead of his time and few would have listened. Perhaps, it isn't too late.

## CORRESPONDENCE

*(Continued from page 99)*

equality for a minority that isn't even looking for it! What is needed is a massive program of education but it has to be carried out on the level of the women at whom it is aimed. The vast majority of these are far below Dr. Daly on the intellectual scale.

PATRICIA YOUNG

### *Missing Links*

Chicago, Ill.

*To the Editors*: In the February 26, 1971 issue of *Commonweal,* the John Deedy overview of the Cairo Illinois situation was generally quite good; however, to add some missing details, among the "and others" the Association of Chicago Priests was represented by the undersigned.

(REV.) DONALD A. DOHR
(REV.) MARK SANTO

### *Up, Lindsay*

Upper Montclair, N.J.

*To the Editors*:I have only one question for Mr. Steinfels regarding Lindsay [Mar. 5.]. Should the cab drivers of New York have the final say about who should run for President? I happen to feel that Lindsay is the only potentially great candidate on the political horizon, and I hardly think his ability to Indian-wrestle with labor's intractable Harry Van Arsdale is a measure of Lindsay's true ability to inspire the destitute U.S.A.

Mr. Steinfels' suggestion that Lindsay switch to the Democratic party merely to campaign for the party's choice is as pointless as his running for President in the Democratic party simply because he couldn't make it in his own. If Mr. Steinfels is as serious about the virtues of Mr. Daley as his column implies, then his playful cynicism, multiplied by the power of the notoriously short American memory, will probably result in a Sen. Muskie in 1972, bound, gagged and served up to us in the same time-honored way that Hubert was offered up to us in 1968. And once again we will probably wonder, on the morn of January 21, 1971, what did it really matter?

Lindsay has delivered the finest oratory and the most dynamic new solutions for the city among all the politicians now contending for the Democratic nomination. He was the only politician who did so though it was bound to hurt his political career —in a spontaneous heartfelt way and not like instant Lincoln on the half tube. It disturbs me that a young critic like Mr. Steinfels has already fallen for the shallow joys of flip cynicism and is not able to see the real quality of Lindsay. I suppose the New York cab drivers were saying the same things about FDR in the winter of '31. We need an inspiration in the White House in 1972, not a postage stamp.

HARVEY S. TURNER

REPLY: No more than Mr. Turner do I wish to be served a bound and gagged Muskie, but I can't agree that Lindsay is the only alternative. One could try to keep Muskie honest or support other Democrats. Lindsay, I fear, will only lead to another serving of Nixon. And while some of my best friends are cab drivers, I didn't think I mentioned them in my column. PETER STEINFELS

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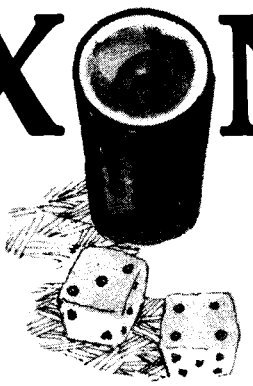

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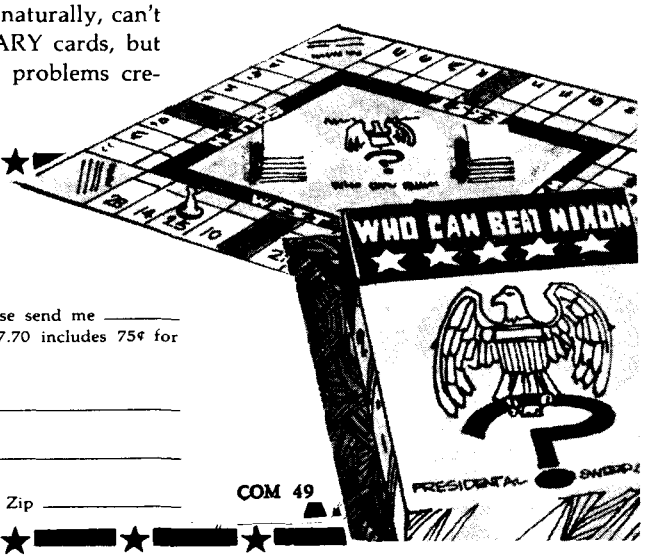


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